

SEPTORIA LEAF SPOT OF BLUEBERRY

S. A. Alfieri, Jr.¹

Blueberry (*Vaccinium spp.*) production is expanding into a significant agricultural industry in Florida. Presently constituting approximately 2,100 acres, it is a relatively young, growing, and vibrant commercial industry. Not much information is known or available on diseases affecting blueberries grown under Florida conditions (1) as compared to other well known extensive production areas (4). However, there are a number of serious disease problems that affect blueberries in other important blueberry-growing areas of the United States (3,4,7).

Among the leaf-spotting organisms of importance in blueberry production is *Septoria albopunctata* Cooke (2,3,6), the cause of eyespot disease. On some varieties, *S. albopunctata* could have a very debilitating effect on plant vigor, such as shown on the foliage of the highbush species *Vaccinium corymbosum* L. in Fig. 1.



Figure 1. Septoria leaf spot of blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum* L.). DPI File #702346-1.

SYMPTOMS: Septoria leaf spot on blueberry is denoted by numerous circular to subcircular, light to medium brown lesions with a broad, purplish brown margin, up to 3 mm in diameter, and often coalescing upon enlargement (Fig. 1).

CONTROL: Presently, there does not appear any evidence that this leaf spot or other leaf-spotting diseases cause reductions in yield in Florida, thus the use of fungicides does not appear warranted. However, cultural control such as collecting or mulching over infected, fallen leaves would help reduce the fungus inoculum during the following growing season (5). In the nursery production of blueberry plants, chemical control of leaf-spotting diseases may be desirable or necessary. In such cases, consulting a County Extension Director or a current Plant Disease Control Guide (5) is advisable.

SURVEY AND DETECTION: The appearance of usually numerous brown, often coalescing, leaf spots with a broad purplish brown margin, approximately 3 mm in diameter, is evidence of this disease.

LITERATURE CITED

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¹Plant Pathologist, Emeritus, FDACS, Division of Plant Industry, P. O. Box 1269, Gainesville, FL 32602

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